

**=A b s t r a c t=**

## Risk factors for hepatocellular carcinoma in Korea

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**Background** : Hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC) is one of the most common neoplasms in the world. Although screening test for HCC has been performed, the high risk factors were not well evaluated in Korea. This study was undertaken to evaluate the risk factors of HCC development in Korea.

**Methods :** We studied a total of 2020 patients who visited Yonsei University Medical Center for regular check-up including ultrasonography (US) and alpha-fetoprotein (AFP) from January 1990 to December 1998. All the detailed data of clinical parameters were obtained by our self-exploited data base system prospectively and analyzed by SAS program.

**Results :** Among 2,020 subjects, 1295 were male and 725 were female (mean age, M: 47 years, F: 50 years). 117 (5.8%) out of 2,020 subjects developed HCC during follow-up period (33months). Annual detection rate of HCC was 1.64%. The independent risk factors by univariate analysis were liver cirrhosis, chronic hepatitis, hepatitis B virus (HBV) or hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection, old age (over 40 years old), heavy alcoholics, severe liver parenchymal echogenic pattern in US, initial level of serum AFP (>20 ng/mL) or alanine aminotransferase (ALT) (>40 IU/L). Multivariate analysis with a proportional hazards model showed liver cirrhosis ( $p=0.000$ ), chronic hepatitis ( $p=0.014$ ), HCV infection ( $p=0.007$ ), HBV infection ( $p=0.049$ ), and old age over 40 years old ( $p=0.000$ ) to be significant risk factors for HCC. We also found that the more risk factors, the higher HCC development. The development of HCC might not be related to history of smoking, family history of HCC, previous therapy such as interferon (IFN), diet, drugs, and transfusion.

**Conclusion :** Screening test for early detection of HCC should be reconsidered according to the relative risk rate of these risk factors.(Korean J Med 60:123- 130, 2001)

**Key Words :** Carcinoma, Hepatocellular; Risk factors; Screening

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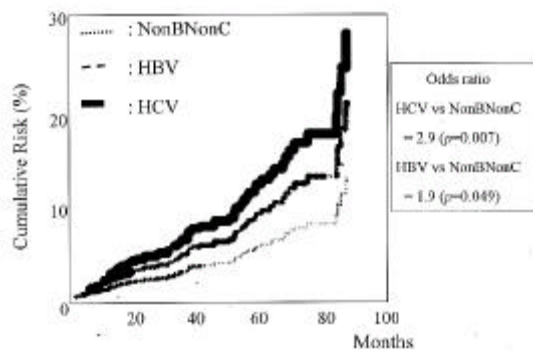
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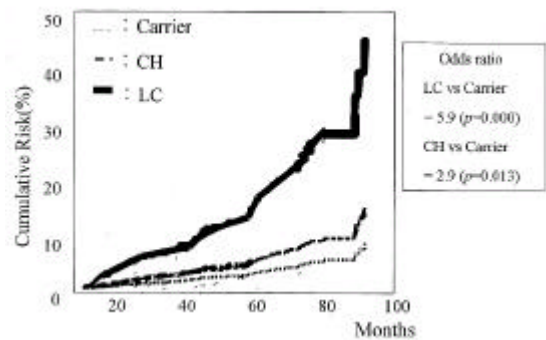
**Table 1. Characteristics of subjects**

	Total n=2020 (%)	HCC n=117 (%)
Sex (male: female)	1295 : 725	86 : 31
Age(years) (male: female)	47 ± 12 : 50 ± 12	57 ± 10 : 59 ± 11
Underlying liver disease		
Liver cirrhosis	503 (24.9)	62 (53.0)
Chronic hepatitis	943 (46.7)	50 (42.7)
Carrier	243 (12.0)	5 (4.3)
Fatty liver	331 (16.4)	0 (0)
Viral markers		
HCV	208 (10.3)	21 (17.9)
HBV	1354 (67.0)	83 (70.9)
NonBNonC	458 (22.7)	13 (11.2)
Initial ALT level at enrollment		
> 40 IU/L	1041 (51.5)	76 (65.0)
40 IU/L	979 (48.5)	41 (35.0)
Initial AFP level at enrollment		
> 20 ng/mL	239 (11.8)	26 (22.2)
20 ng/mL	1781 (88.2)	91 (77.8)
> 400 ng/mL	27 (1.3)	4 (3.4)
400 ng/mL	1993 (98.7)	113 (96.6)

Data are expressed as mean ± SD.



**Figure 2.** Cumulative risk for HCC development according to type of viral hepatitis



**Figure 3.** Cumulative risk for HCC development according to initial disease status

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2,020      117 (5.8%)  
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**Table 2. Significant risk factors for HCC**

Factors	Univariate	Multivariate	
	<i>p</i> - value	OR (95% CI)	<i>p</i> - value
Status of disease			
Liver cirrhosis (n=503)	0.000 <sup>†</sup>	5.9 (2.51- 14.03)	0.000 <sup>†</sup>
Chronic hepatitis (n=943)	0.001 <sup>†</sup>	2.9 (1.24- 6.80)	0.014 <sup>*</sup>
Carrier (n=243)		1.0	
Type of hepatitis			
HCV (n=208)	0.000 <sup>†</sup>	2.9 (1.33- 6.20)	0.007 <sup>†</sup>
HBV (n=1354)	0.001 <sup>†</sup>	1.9 (1.00- 3.55)	0.049 <sup>*</sup>
NonBNonC (n=458)		1.0	
Age(years)			
> 40 (n=1278)	0.000 <sup>†</sup>	2.8 (1.70- 4.76)	0.000 <sup>†</sup>
40 (n=742)		1.0	
Liver parenchymal echogenic pattern			
Severe (n=367)	0.001 <sup>†</sup>	1.6 (0.95- 2.65)	0.078
Normal/Mild (n=1576)		1.0	
Initial ALT level at enrollment			
> 40 IU/L (n=1041)	0.003 <sup>†</sup>	1.5 (0.99- 2.37)	0.054
40 IU/L (n=979)		1.0	
Initial serum AFP level at enrollment			
> 20 ng/mL (n=239)	0.001 <sup>†</sup>	1.5 (0.92- 2.42)	0.104
20 ng/mL (n=1781)		1.0	
Drinking			
Heavy (n=234)	0.005 <sup>†</sup>	1.4 (0.83- 2.40)	0.210
Non/ Social (n=1786)		1.0	
Sex			
Male (n=1295)	0.012 <sup>*</sup>	1.1 (0.71- 1.68)	0.686
Female (n=725)		1.0	

\*:  $p < 0.05$ , † :  $p < 0.01$ , OR; Odds ratio, CI; Confidence interval

(Table 2). 가

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( $p=0.014$ ), C ( $p=0.007$ ), B ( $p=0.000$ ), 30 , 40

( $p=0.007$ ), 40 ( $p=0.000$ ) B C 50 ,

가 5.9 가 3.

C 2.9 , 40 2.8 (Table 2, Figure 2, 3).

(Risk Index)

**Table 3. Insignificant risk factors for HCC**

Factors	Chi- square <i>p</i> - value
Smoking	0.953
Smoker (n=702)	
Non- smoker (n=1318)	
Transfusion history	0.060
Yes (n=365)	
No (n=1655)	
Previous IFN therapy	0.944
Yes (n=226)	
No (n=1794)	
History of Drugs	0.221
Yes (n=786)	
No (n=1234)	
Concomitant chronic diseases	0.164
Yes (n=624)	
No (n=1396)	
Family history of HCC	0.242
Yes (n=280)	
No (n=1740)	
Family history of other cancer	0.203
Yes (n=304)	
No (n=1716)	
History of diet therapy	0.161
Yes (n=282)	
No (n=1738)	

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Risk Index (RI) for HCC= e<sup>A</sup>

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+ (1.0460 × (40 )) + (0.0873 × ) + (0.4001 × AFP (20 IU/mL )) + (0.4270 × ALT (40 IU/L ))

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Adami 19) 가

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Yamaguchi 24) 가

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1295 , 725

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31) AFP 20 IU/mL , ALT ,

B C 30 , 40 50 3) ( p=0.000),

( p=0.014), C ( p=0.007), B ( p=0.007), 40 ( p=0.000)

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C 가 5.9 가 2.9 , 40

2.8 .

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: , B C , 40 , , AFP 20 IU/mL

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